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HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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A HARIJAN'S LETTER

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A Harijan friend complains bitterly about my article on sweepers' strike.

His first complaint is that I have given up the sweet name 'Harijan' and used 'Bhangi' instead. The criticism shows the sensitive nature of the correspondent. It was a Gujarati untouchable, in the first instance, who suggested the name 'Harijan' to me and I willingly adopted it. This does not, however, mean that a current word for any sub-caste may never be used. I count myself a *Harijan* and it pleases me to call myself a *Bhangi* among them, because that is the lowest caste of *Harijans*. When I stayed recently in the sweepers' quarters in Delhi, the *Harijans* there too complained against the use of the word 'Bhangi'. They suggested 'Mehtar'. I tried to make them understand that it mattered little as to which of the current words was used for the same occupation. In spite of being considered the lowest occupation, it was in fact the highest inasmuch as it protected health and they should be indifferent to the name. Whatever the origin of the word may be, 'Bhangi' is, in my opinion, another name for *Shivji*. Whether you call a sweeper a *Mehtar* or a *Bhangi*, like *Shivji* he brings health to man. The one brings it by keeping the home clean, the other cleanses the mind of man.

The second criticism is more serious. Prejudices are responsible for misunderstandings. If we take by force even that to which we are entitled, the action is likely to lead to a quarrel. We may not even be able to digest what we get by force. The strikers got what they did by coercion. At least, that is my belief. If my occupation is to keep latrines clean and I refused to do the work, can it be termed anything other than coercion? Of course, I am not bound to take up the job of cleaning latrines and I may be said to have every right to lay down my conditions of service. But according to my way of thinking, the laying down of conditions is not an absolute right. Even if such an absolute right would be permitted, it might not be proper to use it under certain circumstances. But I do not want to enter into the justification of this reasoning. I tried to show in my article the duties of *Bhangis* as well as of citizens. I have often said that every kind of injustice is meted out to *Bhangis*. I have no doubt that citizens do not fulfil their obligations to them. Thus it is their duty to see that *Harijan* dwellings are built properly, the means employed for cleaning are decent, that they have a special working uniform given to them, that they and their children have facilities for education etc. These and other problems should be solved without loss of time. The *Bhangis* may not go on strike for lack of these amenities but it is up to all citizens to raise their voice on behalf of them.

Yet another criticism is directed against my suggestion of the use of the military to do sweepers' work. I do not see any wrong in what I said. I have re-read my article and am not willing to withdraw one single word of it. I do not regret having written as I did. I advise *Harijan* friends to read it in the proper spirit. If they do so, they will see that my feelings on their behalf have undergone no change.

Simla, 5-5-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

Notes

The Late Bhulabhai Desai

It was the heroism and travail of Bardoli that brought to public life men like Shri Bhulabhai Desai. He might otherwise have remained a distinguished Government servant and ended his career as a judge of the Bombay High Court. He reached the height of fame when his forensic talents resulted in the release of the I. N. A. prisoners. His son and daughter-in-law have in me, like many others, a co-sharer in their grief which, it is to be hoped, they will turn into joy by inheriting the deceased's love of the country's service, which alone makes life worth living.

Simla, 6-5-'46

Ramanavami Celebrations

"They get the best talent from the South at enormous cost for the sake of amusement. The artistes who preside are of questionable morals. All this at a religious festival." This is a condensation of a correspondent's letter. When a man begins a downward career, it is difficult to say where the deterioration will end. Intoxication of wealth is often as bad as that caused by liquor. The only way to stop this degradation of religious or for that matter any celebrations is for the public not to patronize them.

Simla, 2-5-'46 M. K. G.

THE SO-CALLED DECIMAL COINAGE

The Central Legislative Assembly having decided to circulate the Cent Bill for eliciting public opinion, as one, perhaps, partly responsible for influencing this decision, I owe it to the public to explain more fully my views about this measure.

I am conscious of the comparative simplicity of decimal arithmetic. Two facts must, however, be borne in mind in regard to this simplicity: (i) it is particularly available to calculations made on paper rather than to oral ones, and (ii) the cause of the simplicity is not the number ten, but the use of *zero* in representing every tenth number. If the ancient inventor of numerical digits had arranged objects in groups of, say, eight or sixteen instead of ten and utilized zero for representing every eighth or sixteenth number, all the advantages of decimal reckoning would have accrued to that arrangement as well. It was rather unfortunate that he did not do so. For, in practice, it is easier to divide a thing into halves, quarters, eighths, etc. than into one-fifths, one-tenths etc. A child of seven would be able to divide a piece of string into 2, 4, 8 or even 16 equal parts with greater ease and without a measuring rod than an educated adult could divide it into 1/10th or 1/5th.

But as this is not a thesis for bringing about a revolution in Mathematics, I shall not dilate further upon this. We have to accept the decimal system as an irrevocably established custom as long as the present human race lasts, and make as best use of it as possible. As far as multiples are concerned, we find that all the world over it is used by the learned and the ignorant alike. Thus all of them say, ten or twenty or hundred rupees, maunds, seers, feet, yards etc. But when it comes to the sub-divisions of a unit, it is all anarchy. There is, however, a negative peculiarity about this anarchy. Until the invention of the scientific Metrical System, nowhere do we find a general tendency to sub-divide a unit into tenths. Where it is not a half or a quarter, it is 1/3rd, 1/6th, 1/12th, 1/28th and anything but 1/10th. It seems that the untrained intellect of man has never been able to conceive of 1/10th, although the decimal fraction itself has been used in mathematical calculations for several centuries now.

I have been reminded that India has the honour of inventing the decimal. India should also be credited with the honour of inventing the *chauthai* (quarteral) system as well. In the midst of anarchy in respect of sub-divisions, she has tried to establish some order by introducing the quarteral system as nearly as possible in the various tables of measurement. Thus the rupee has been progressively divided into 4 quarters, 16 annas or 64 pice; the *tola* into 32 *wals;* the seer into 16 chhataks. When a smaller unit had to be related to a larger one of the same order, the quarteral system has often been combined with the decimal one. Thus the seer is made of 80 *tolas*, the maund of 40 seers, the *khandi* of 20 maunds and so on.

Progressive halving being obviously easy, it suggests itself more naturally to the human mind than decimalization. Even the author of the Cent Coinage Bill has not been able to forget the half and the quarter rupee. If the decimal system were applied to its logical perfection, there should have been a proposal to sub-divide the rupee into 10 *dasais* (decemfids) and each *dasai* into 10 cents. The nomenclature "half-rupee" should have given place to 5 *dasais* or 50 cents, and the quarter-rupee should have disappeared as unharmonious. Coins of 1 and 2 *dasais* would have been more regular. But the proposal is to keep the half and the quarter rupee unchanged. Therefore, in spite of the title "decimal coinage" given to the measure, the proposal virtually amounts to one of dividing the quarter-rupee into 25 equal parts instead of the present 4 annas, 16 pice or 48 pies.

I do not blame the author for this logical imperfection. For, it shows that he was mindful of the necessity of not sacrificing practical convenience to logical perfection. On the same practical ground I urge for the search of a better solution than the proposed cent. I have pointed out in my former criticisms on this bill how during the transition period when both the anna and the cent coins will circulate side by side, whenever a person was obliged to pay partly in cents and partly in the old coins, he would always have to pay a little more than the exact amount. I have also pointed out how the re-pricing of retail articles in terms of the cent would tend to make them more costly automatically. I should also point out that to the illiterate villager — man or woman — who cannot often count up to more than twenty and hardly ever up to one hundred, prices in terms of, say, 35 cents, 48 cents, 72 cents etc. will be extremely puzzling. He can understand and know how to pay 5½ annas, 7½ as., 11¼ and so on, but not the other figures, which are very nearly their equivalents. He can also add up these amounts orally and know the total in terms of rupees, annas and quarter annas. But he cannot, unaided, be able to add up the cents. These difficulties will disappear with the spread of education, but they are not so trivial as could be ignored just at present.

But I realize fully that all these arguments may still fail to satisfy the eager theoretician and industrialist, and their influence might prevail. Nor am I myself blind to the necessity of an advance towards decimalization to suit the requirements of science and modern business. Some way, therefore, must be found for meeting these requirements, without causing inconvenience or loss to the humble citizen. With this end, I shall make some constructive suggestions in my next article.

K. G. Mashruwala

[Shri K. G. Mashruwala's note is a fairly conclusive argument to show that there should be no hurry over the proposed change. Let such things await a full-fledged national representative government. Simla, 3-5-'46 M. K. G.]

USEFUL HINTS

[The following excerpts are taken from Prof. Kumarappa's notes. M. K. G.]

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Co-operative societies are ideally suited organizations, not only for developing village industries, but also for promoting group efforts by the villagers. A multi-purpose village society can serve a very useful purpose in a variety of ways such as:

1. Stocking of raw materials for industries, and food grains needed by the village people.
2. Marketing of village products and distributing the requirements of the people.
3. Distribution of seeds, improved implements and tools, manures such as bonemeal, flesh, fish manure, oilcakes, green manure seeds etc.
4. To maintain a common stud bull for the area.
5. To stand between the Government and the people in the matter of collection and payment of taxes etc.

Much of the wastage caused to food grains in transport and handling, and the expenses of collecting food grains to a central place and redistributing them again to the villages can be eliminated through the agency of a co-operative society which is a very reliable medium both from the government as well as from the public point of view. If stocks of grain are held by co-operative societies in villages, the remuneration of local officials can be conveniently paid partly in kind and this may facilitate the much desired system of collecting revenue also in kind.

AGRICULTURE

The production of crops should be controlled keeping two considerations in mind. (1) The locality must try to produce its own food requirements and raw materials required for primary necessities of life in preference to commercial crops. (2) It must try to produce raw materials suitable for village industries rather than for factories, for example, instead of growing thick rinded sugar-cane or long staple cotton as demanded by factories, soft rinded sugar-cane as can be crushed by village *kolhus* for *gur*-making and short staple cotton as required for hand-spinning should be grown. The surplus land can be utilized to supplement crops needed by surrounding districts. Land utilized for sugar-cane of the factory requirements, tobacco, jute and other money crops should be eliminated or reduced to the minimum. In order to make the farmers adopt this policy heavy dues or excess land revenue should be levied on land used to raise money crops and that too after a licence has been obtained. This will give the farmers no incentive to go in for money crops in preference. On the whole the prices of the agricultural products should be made to compare favourably with those of industrial products.

Commercial crops such as tobacco, jute, sugar-cane, etc. are doubly wasteful. They reduce the food production for man as well as for animals which would otherwise have got their fodder from food crops.

The supply of *gur* which may be reduced with the decline of sugar-cane crops of the factory varieties can be made good by the production of *gur* from palm trees now tapped for *toddy* or from those which are found or can be grown in waste lands in sufficient numbers as practically to meet our demand in this respect. The best land put under sugar-cane today can then be utilized for the production of cereals, fruits and vegetables which India needs so badly today.

IRRIGATION

The need for providing irrigation facilities to all the villages cannot be emphasized too greatly. This is the foundation upon which agriculture depends for its progress, in the absence of which it remains a gamble. A drive for sinking wells, enlarging and dredging tanks and building canals has to be launched. The power engines used in rice and flour mills now can be acquired by the Governments to pump up water from tube wells. No proper manuring can be done without water facilities, as manure in the absence of water is harmful.

(To be continued)

Simla, 3-5-'46

GANDHIJI'S PRESS STATEMENT

Pressmen are inquiring already why my large party is going back. This is a personal question. I would rather avoid answering it, but in these days of publicity and speculation the question cannot be evaded. The reason is purely moral, if it may not be described as spiritual. My task as a self-appointed adviser to all the parties concerned is the most delicate at the present moment. The Simla venue was declared all of a sudden. It dawned on me that if I was to go to Simla, I must go without the usual party, even though 'Harijan' work might suffer. Had I succeeded in carrying conviction to the members of my party, they would have remained behind in Delhi. The time within which the decision was to be taken was only a few hours on the 1st instant. They were anxious for my well-being. The whole moral purpose would be defeated, if I did not carry their mind with me. They, therefore, came to Simla. But the matter was still agitating me. So I conferred with Pyarelal yesterday. He felt convinced that I should be left free to put myself solely in God's keeping, if I was to work under as much detachment as was possible for me. The best part of the afternoon was devoted to prayerful discussion that the party should go back to the heat of Delhi and await me there to rejoin me when I descended. This is the sole reason without reservation.

Simla, 4-5-'46

By M. K. Gandhi
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HARIJAN

May 12 1946

CERTAIN QUESTIONS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A London friend has put seven questions on the working of non-violence. Though similar questions have been dealt with in 'Young India' or 'Harijan', it is profitable to answer them in a single article, if perchance the answers may prove helpful.

Q. 1 Is it possible for a modern State (which is essentially based on force) to offer non-violent resistance for countering internal as well as external forces of disorder? Or is it necessary that people wanting to offer non-violent resistance should first of all divest themselves of state-authority and place themselves *vis-a-vis* the opponent entirely in a private capacity?

A. It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, i.e. it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a State was Ashoka's. The example can be repeated. But the case does not become weak even if it be shown that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined on its merits.

Q. 2 Do you think that it would be possible for a Congress government to deal with foreign aggression or internal riots in an entirely non-violent manner?

A. It is certainly possible for a Congress government to deal with "foreign aggression or internal riots" in a non-violent manner. That the Congress may not share my belief is quite possible. If the Congress changes its course, the change will prove nothing save that the non-violence hitherto offered was of the weak and that the Congress has no faith in State non-violence.

Q. 3 Does not the knowledge that the opponent is wedded to non-violence often encourage the bully?

A. The bully has his opportunity when he has to face non-violence of the weak. Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

Q. 4 What policy would you advocate if a section of the Indian people tries to enforce by sword a selfish measure which is not only repugnant to others but also basically unjust? While it is possible for an unofficial organization to offer non-violent resistance in such a case, is it also possible for the government of the day to do so?

A. The question assumes a case which can never exist. A non-violent State must be broad-based on the will of an intelligent people, well able to know its mind and act up to it. In such a State the assumed section can only be negligible. It can never stand against the deliberate will of the overwhelming majority represented by the State. The government of the day is not outside the people. It is the will of the overwhelming majority. If it is expressed non-violently, it cannot be a majority of one but nearer 99 against 1 in a hundred.

Q. 5 Is not non-violent resistance by the militarily strong more effective than that by the militarily weak?

A. This is a contradiction in terms. There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents. Those who are strong in non-violence will not mind whether they are opposed by the militarily weak people or the strongest.

Q. 6 What should be the training and discipline for a non-violent army? Should not certain aspects of conventional military training form a part of the syllabus?

A. A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

Q. 7 Is it not better under existing circumstances that countries like India and England should maintain full military efficiency while resolving to give non-violent resistance a reasonable trial before taking any military step?

A. The foregoing answers should make it clear that under no circumstance can India and England give non-violent resistance a reasonable chance whilst they are both maintaining full military efficiency. At the same time it is perfectly true that all military powers carry on negotiations for peaceful adjustment of rival disputes. But here we are not discussing preliminary peace parleys before appealing to the arbitrament of war. We are discussing a final substitute for armed conflict called war, in naked terms mass murder.

Simla, 2-5-'46

IS KHADI TOTTERING ?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

To those who have no faith Khadi is tottering. In reality it is gaining ground. From being the poor man's staff of life, it is trying to become the non-violent means of gaining independence. The difficulty is fairly clearly expressed in the following paragraphs from a letter from Tamil Nad.

"The A. I. S. A. is faced with two problems now. The one is to keep on the Khadi production on the present methods. The other is to give reorientation to our activity related to artisans and their villages where we serve.

"The commercial production as it is, is seriously affected in the last few months owing to competition of the uncertified merchants in Khadi. The uncertified merchants buy the yarn from our spinners who spin with better cotton supplied by us. They buy Khadi woven by the weavers out of our yarn and sell it with profit. They go to our weavers' homes and buy the Khadi woven for us by giving extra wages and yarn equivalent for the Khadi. The weavers part with our Khadi as they get extra wages and yarn at their own homes. The Khadi thus bought is sold as special Khadi with higher prices.

"There are more than fifty uncertified Khadi dealers in this area, who are said to produce about Rs. 7 lakhs worth of uncertified Khadi monthly. Among these are Congressmen also, who occupy places in the Congress Executive.

"We are not able to influence the artisans against being exploited by the uncertified merchants though the former have their deposits with us. They simply say that they are not able to resist the temptation of higher wages for inferior labour and with no conditions that we impose with regard to quality and their wearing Khadi, etc. The spinners are given besides an inferior cotton called *bonda* by the uncertified dealers which require, no carding. This is mill waste available for about three-fourths the price of good cotton. The yarn spun is only in sheafs without hanking. As this is simpler the spinners prefer this cotton. Because higher wages are paid for indifferent labour and no deposits are taken for Khadi from spinners and as there is no insistence upon quality of yarn etc. there is a tendency on the part of the spinners to work under the uncertified merchants.

"This tendency among the artisans is a great impediment and obstacle in approaching them with our ideals of village reconstruction through the Charkha."

The present method of Khadi production has to be sacrificed if it hinders re-orientation. This requires faith and the alertness which faith brings. Faith never accrues to the lazy.

Uncertified Khadi dealers are a powerful menace to Khadi whether from the standpoint of the poor man or of non-violence. For, the dealer knows only his own pocket and nothing else matters to him. Of course, he goes to the weaver and the spinner and makes all kinds of promises, not knowing that if he killed the A. I. S. A. he would kill himself.

The pity of it all is that Congressmen become willing tools in the hands of these uncertified dealers. They have brought into being an association of specialists. Yet they do not know that they are willingly or unwillingly killing the goose that lays the golden egg. They have a right to do so in any case, more so if they do not believe in Khadi as the non-violent instrument of Swaraj.

It has been suggested to me that the policy of the A. I. S. A. can be changed only after consultation with Congressmen. This is wrong in the nature of things. The A. I. S. A. is composed of Congressmen. Though created by the Congress, it is an autonomous body. It can be disowned by the Congress at any time but while it is owned it must be trusted to do the right thing in terms of Swaraj. Part payment in yarn is a potent cause of worry to Congressmen. This should not be so, if they believe that Khadi is a symbol of non-violence and all that it implies. If such is not the belief the clause about compulsory wear of Khadi should be given up.

Moreover, Khadi furnishes the acid test of public honesty. It is a great effort to find the best way of inducing honesty in public dealings, for it means coming in close and selfless touch with the millions of men and women in the villages.

The upshot of it all is that workers like the writer have to carry on their work with full faith in their mission and leave the result in the hands of God.

Simla, 3-5-'46

THE CHARITY OF THE RICH

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

The following is the gist of what a friend writes :

"You accept many donations from the wealthy. There can be no doubt that the money is well spent. But the question is as to whether these donations should be accepted for your work. The donors certainly get a name thereby and among them might even be black-marketeers. Can such charity benefit the poor?"

The question really boils down to whether donations are in themselves wrong. I have no doubt about their being so in my own mind. But the world works differently. The author of the Gita has said that all undertakings are tainted. Therefore, all action should be performed with complete detachment. The *Ishopanishad* begins by saying that all action must be preceded by a full surrender of everything to God. It must, however, be admitted that even if everyone ceased to receive charity, the rich would not cease to amass wealth. It is also a fact that some rich people are stingy enough never to give anything in charity. Some even give money for nefarious purposes. Therefore, all that one can say is that certain principles should be observed in the matter of receiving charity. Not one pie should be taken for selfish ends and all should be received with God as witness.

I do, however, hold that it would be wrong to receive money from any group or individual whom the recipient considers to be unworthy. The discussion is naturally relevant only for those who are troubled by conscientious scruples.

Simla, 5-5-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

INTROSPECTION

The following is the gist of Gandhiji's Hindustani speech at the evening prayer gathering on 2-5-'46 — the day of his arrival at Simla.

I did not know that I would have to come to Simla this time. If we have faith in God we simply would not care to know beforehand how He may dispose of us. It is enough for us to hold ourselves perfectly in readiness for whatever happens. We are not allowed to know what tomorrow has in store for us and our best conceived plans have a knack very often of going awry. The highest wisdom therefore is never to worry about the future but to resign ourselves entirely to His Will.

I do not propose to say anything here about the Cabinet Mission. And I would like you too, on your part, to repress your curiosity about it. Let us all mutely watch and pray. As I told the people who attended the evening prayer gathering at Delhi yesterday, the Cabinet Mission will not be able to go beyond what is warranted by our strength. We shall be fools to think otherwise. Even if they tried to go beyond, it would only cause us surfeit and we would not be able to take advantage of it. Therefore, even if the Mission should prove infructuous I would not blame them for it. Rather I would blame ourselves for our weakness. It would give us a measure of our strength. By strength I mean non-violent strength. We are pledged to gain Swaraj non-violently.

Many people today share the belief, and I am one of them, that this time the Cabinet Mission will do the right thing by India and that the British power would finally and completely be withdrawn. Time alone will show how far this belief is justified.

Now to take up the question I want to talk to you about. The first *mantra* of the *Ishopanishad* says that it is man's duty to surrender his all to God in the first instance. There is nothing which he can call his own. Having made the surrender man is to take out of it what he may require for his legitimate needs but not a jot more. He must not covet what belongs to others. Take my instance. I have been housed here in a palatial building. For fear of your embarrassing affection I had to seek Government's hospitality and they put me up here. That however does not mean that since the Government have placed a big bungalow at my disposal I am free to make use of the whole of it. Tolstoy, in one of his inimitable parables, has answered the question, how much land a man requires. The Devil tempts a man by granting him a boon that all the land that he can circumscribe by running around shall be his. The man runs and runs, goaded by his greed and in the end when the sun is just sinking below the horizon, he reaches back the starting point only to drop down dead. Six feet of the earth is all the land that he requires for his burial. If, therefore, I were to delude myself with the belief that I needed the whole of this bungalow and took possession of it, I would be set down as a fool. Only a perverse nature can interpret the verse to mean that after making a ceremony of offering everything to God one can indulge oneself in the good things of life to an unlimited extent. That would be a travesty of its true meaning. I would far rather like to see a man dressed in old, mended clothes than in gaudy new ones. To wear torn clothes is a sign of laziness and therefore shame, but to wear patched clothes proclaims your poverty or renunciation and industry. Similarly, if someone gives me Rs. 25,000/- and I spend it on my person I am a robber and thief. I can use only enough for my bare needs. That would be the teaching of *Ishopanishad*.

Simla, 3-5-'46 PYARELAL

WEEKLY LETTER

THE DILEMMA

The late Shri Mahadev Desai often used to say that to be with Gandhiji was like sitting on the top of a volcano which might erupt. at any time. Little did any of us dream, when Gandhiji decided to go to Simla, that within fortyeight hours of his reaching there, he would be sending his whole entourage packing back to the plains of Delhi. He has a nature extraordinarily sensitive to the atmosphere around him. Reverses and defeats he takes with unperturbed calm as the workings of the Divine Will, but the slightest taint of untruth in the atmosphere, or even a suspicion of it, oppresses him. He had accepted the delicate role of adviser to the Cabinet Mission and ourselves. But there was something in the general situation — something uncanny which he could sense but not quite define— which made him feel extremely uneasy. And as is his wont on such occasions, believing as he does in the principle of "as with yourself so with the universe", he began by subjecting himself to fierce self-introspection and overhaul. If he was square with himself, he knew, it would be all well with the world.

THE TEST

Thanks to the burden of editing three—now four—Harijan weeklies and attending to the growing volume of correspondence and other work he has nowadays to keep a rather large staff with him. On Tuesday last he asked me to set down the barest minimum of personnel that we would require to accompany us to Simla. This I did. But it did not quite satisfy him.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, our unfailing host at Simla on the previous occasion, felt extremely unhappy as Manor Ville had only limited accommodation and a number of her domestic staff were sick or on leave. And then there was the Mahatmic handicap — the necessity of protecting him from the embarrassing affection of the crowds. Here was a dilemma. The Government had thoughtfully placed at his disposal a big bungalow at Simla and made transport arrangements for himself and his party. Should he avail himself of these without stint? His faith in God and his detachment, he felt, were on trial. Further reduction in the staff seemed hardly feasible. But, did he hope to cope with the situation through unaided human effort? And if he was to be merely an instrument for carrying out the Divine

Will, were outward trappings necessary for his purpose? "We are up against heavy odds. There is so much corruption, falsehood and deceit all around. How can I cut my way through it and come out of it unscathed, except by the use of the sharp axe of detachment," he said to himself. He put his dilemma before the party. "In this hour of trial I wish to put myself entirely in God's hands and proceed to Simla all alone. But I do not want to do so unless I can carry you with me. To force my will upon you would be the negation of detachment." The party felt staggered. They could not take upon themselves the tremendous responsibility of letting him go altogether unattended. After a hurried deliberation they communicated their unanimous decision to me to be placed before him. It was: "Let him take with him three only, or you alone, and we will be satisfied. But he cannot be allowed to go all alone. We cannot think of it." But Gandhiji was adamant. "None or all" was his laconic reply. "Faith cannot be divided. You cannot trust me to God in part." As the poet says, "Want of faith in aught is want of faith in all."

AN ACT OF FAITH

But there was no time then for further consideration and so the whole party trekked up to Simla.

Gandhiji's self-introspection however continued and found vent in his after-prayer discourse on the first day of his arrival at Simla when he took up the first verse of the *Ishopanishad* as his text. "Surrender all to Him and then, out of His, use for His service whatever is absolutely necessary — not a jot more." Could he be said to be acting according to the Upanishadic teaching while he surrounded himself by his entourage? "All must be surrendered to Him in the first instance and then His work carried on with whatever material may come to you through His grace." The preliminary stripping was a necessity. He again broached the proposition to us. "'Unless the Lord build the house, they build in vain who build it.' Why not let me take my chance with God?" It was not too late yet to perform that act of faith, he told us. "Now retire within yourself and seek the answer there. Do not consult others. And let me know the result," he said to me.

Later in the day he poured out his soul to Agatha Harrison. "The world will laugh at me and say: 'Here is a theatrical man.' I do not mind it. When one is used to human aids it is not easy to tear oneself away from them all of a sudden. I am very conservative in my feelings. I have spent half a day in searching for a small bit of pencil which had been with me for a long time. I could not reconcile myself to its loss. And here I have to detach myself from my entire surroundings and send away a party whom I have trained and seasoned for my work for years — no easy job.

"It should not be so. All should be same to one who has surrendered his all to God. My *Ramanam* will be vain repetition and I would be a wretched guide for the Congress, the Cabinet Mission and others, if I allowed that feeling of attachment to weigh with me. If they follow my advice it might be like a plunge in darkness. As seasoned politicians they cannot afford to take that risk. My guidance must, therefore, be unalloyed.

"If you are surrounded by your family, they divide your attention in however small or subtle a measure. I wish in this crisis to give my undivided self to God."

"You feel you have to deal with an extraordinarily acute crisis?" asked Agatha Harrison.

A DOUBLE CRISIS

"Yes, there is a crisis within a crisis. Not only is there the outward crisis, which you see, but a crisis within myself," replied Gandhiji.

"It remains to be seen how I come out of the test," he continued. "So far people around me had attended to every little thing for me. If anything went wrong they were responsible. From tomorrow I shall have to do all that myself and blame myself only, if anything goes wrong. With all that I must feel at ease with myself. I shall have to watch myself. It will be a great thing if I survive that detachment and feel the inner joy — not start running high blood pressure. It is a big experiment in my life and a necessary stage in my spiritual growth."

What was one to say before this moral passion?

"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken,
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a mild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

SURRENDER

Mystics and seers have a way of their own. It is the same all the world over. One seemed almost to hear the voice of Thomas a Kempis across the centuries.

> "O Lord, I stand much in need of yet greater grace, if I ought to reach that place, where no man nor any creature shall be a hindrance unto me. For as long as anything holdeth me back, I cannot freely fly to Thee."

and again,

> "Unless too a man be disentangled from all creatures, he cannot freely attend unto divine things."
>
> * * *
>
> "And unless a man be elevated in spirit, and freed from all creatures, and wholly united unto God, whatsoever he knoweth, and whatsoever he hath, is of no great weight."
>
> * * *
>
> "And whatsoever is not God, is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing."

What right had we puny creatures to hold him down in his upward flight? It would have been vain conceit on our part to think that he would be handicapped for want of our assistance. I surrendered. "It will be as you wish", I told him. "We shall be returning to Delhi by the first available train."

I communicated my decision to the Sardar. I wondered what he would have to say. I confess I felt a bit nervous. But he only said, "You are right. We may not always be able to follow him in his upward flight or even to fully grasp his reasoning. But we have no right to stand in his way."

Simla, 4-5-'46 PYARELAL

SEEKING BLESSINGS

Before starting for Simla, Gandhiji revisited the super-octogenarian of Indian nationalism at 5, Canning Street, to take leave of him and his blessings for his mission. Badsha Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan accompanied him. It was Gandhiji's day of silence, being Monday and he had, therefore, to communicate by writing only. As before, Malaviyaji was reclining in his bed. But he looked fresher than on the previous visit. In reply to Gandhiji's question as to what he proposed to do since the venue of the Cabinet Mission talks was going to be shifted to Simla, Malaviyaji said, he would be returning to Benares. That relieved Gandhiji as he was half afraid lest in his irrepressible enthusiasm this *enfant terrible* should decide to venture up the heights of Simla. That would be courting disaster at his age and in his present state of health.

"How long are you to continue to worry over the country's affairs?" Gandhiji asked him, marvelling at his perennial freshness.

"So long as the country's affairs continue to cause worry," he replied with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

"Won't you leave something to a youth like myself," scribbled out Gandhiji on another slip of paper and added, "It will make me even younger."

"This young man," replied Malaviyaji in an audible whisper, his eyes beaming at his visitor, "is going to remain young for many a day yet."

But Gandhiji was determined not to be put off so easily. As in the case of Gurudev he was eager to take upon himself Malaviyaji's burdens too, if the latter would allow it.

"You can entrust any of your burdens to me," he told him. "The only condition is that *you* must cease worrying and bless me with some of your strength."

"The name of God is the strength of our strength," replied Malaviyaji.

"That is true. The recitation of *Ramanam* is there all the time. But wherefrom shall I bring your learning? I am not flattering. I have neither your erudition nor your knowledge of the Mahabharata and the Bhagawata lore."

"But you have God's name which is the quintessence of all knowledge. Is it not?"

"That is true, but all the same I do feel jealous of your learning. But now you must get well and make use of all your learning to that end."

"I will get well," replied Malaviyaji.

At this stage Pandit Radhakant told Gandhiji that he had read out his article on Vanaspati Ghee, which had appeared in '*Harijan*', to his father and it had pleased him immensely.

"It is a national menace, this spread of vegetable ghee on the one hand, and the slaughter of the cows on the other. Between the two the vitality of the people is being sapped. I feel so happy over what you have done and are doing for the milk supply," commented Malaviyaji.

Gandhiji agreed with him as regards the menace of the vegetable ghee and added, "My efforts to solve the milk problem, of course continue, but success is not possible without the full cooperation of our commercial and trading class. But I must now take leave of you."

Malaviyaji smiled leave and blessings in reply, making *namaskars* at the same time. As Gandhiji rose from his seat he (Malaviyaji) slowly recited the following verse:

"Forget not yourself,
"But continue to spread your fragrance wherever you are,
"Even like the rose."

That was Malaviyaji's way of giving blessings.

Simla, 4-5-'46 PYARELAL

A SURE AID

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A correspondent suggests three aids to self-control, of which two are outward and one is inward The inward help he describes as follows:

> "A third thing that helps towards self-control is *Ramanam*. This has got the terrible power of converting one's sex desire into a divine longing for the Lord. In fact it seems to me from experience that the sex desire present in almost all human beings is a form of *Kundalini Shakti* left to its own natural growth and development. Just as man has fought against nature ever since creation, so also he should fight against this natural tendency of his *Kundalini* and see that it acts upward instead of downward. Once the *Kundalini* begins to act upward its direction is towards the brain and gradully will it dawn upon such a man that he and all whom he sees around him are but different manifestations of the same Lord."

There is no doubt that *Ramanam* is the surest aid. If recited from the heart it charms away every evil thought, and evil thought gone, no corresponding action is possible. The outward helps are all useless if the mind is weak. They are superfluous if the mind is pure. This must not be taken to mean that a pure-minded man can take all the liberties and still keep safe. Such a man simply will not take any liberties with himself. His whole life will be an infallible testimony to the inward purity. The Gita truly says that mind makes the man and unmakes him. Milton paraphrases the same thought when he says:

> "The mind is its own place and in itself can make a heaven of hell and hell of heaven."

Simla, 2-5-'46

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